

Wapping High School

153 Commercial Road, London E1 2DA

Inspection dates

4–5 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Standards in teaching, learning and assessment, and outcomes, remain too variable across groups of pupils, year groups and subjects, despite improvements since the last inspection.
- Teachers do not use assessment information consistently enough when planning lessons to meet the needs of all pupils. This means that some groups of pupils do not make the progress they should.
- Pupils' outcomes are improving. However, while some gaps in performance between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are narrowing, others remain. In Year 10, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is too wide in some subjects. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and boys are making less progress than their peers, particularly in Years 7 and 8.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is usually respectful and orderly. However, instances of poor behaviour mean that exclusions remain too high. Disadvantaged pupils do not attend as well as their peers.
- The curriculum is not broad enough. In particular, it does not meet the needs of least-able pupils sufficiently well. Although all pupils study subjects that will lead to the English Baccalaureate qualification, current information indicates that too many will not achieve it.
- Leaders' plans to support least-able pupils to improve their literacy have not had the intended impact. The rate of progress made by pupils who require additional literacy support is too variable.
- The impact of support for pupils with education, health and care plans is not consistently allowing them to make enough progress. Specialist support is not securely in place. Attendance is too low and exclusions are too high for this group when compared with their peers.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is consistently strong. This reflects a good enrichment curriculum and programme of personal development. Pupils enjoy learning about other cultures and being part of the house system.
- Pupils' attendance overall and punctuality have improved as a result of improved pastoral support and increased parental engagement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes rapidly for all groups of pupils by:
 - fully embedding the school’s assessment system so that all teachers have quick and easy access to information about pupils’ progress, and leaders and governors can evaluate the progress of groups of pupils more accurately
 - leaders ensuring that teachers use accurate assessment information to support their planning so that they can meet the needs of all groups of pupils.
- Improve attendance and reduce exclusions of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Develop the breadth of the curriculum offered at key stage 4 so that it fully prepares pupils for their subsequent education, training and employment.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders have put in place systems that are now beginning to secure improvements in line with their plans for the school's development. While this has led to some improvement in key areas, leaders' actions have not secured consistently strong outcomes for all groups of pupils.
- Leaders have drawn on external support to guide their development planning and to review the effectiveness of changes made to practice. While external support has led to some early gains, more recently introduced systems have yet to bring about consistent improvements. For example, the work of the recently appointed special educational needs coordinator is improving the focus on pupils' individual needs. However, a new system to support pupils with an education, health and care plan is not consistently driving improvements in those pupils' outcomes and attendance.
- The school's assessment system is used increasingly well by senior and subject leaders. It is beginning to underpin how teachers plan to support underperforming pupils. However, the impact of this process is not consistently strong across all subjects because in some areas the system of assessment is currently being reviewed or changed. As a result, this is hindering leaders' sharp analysis of pupils' performance.
- Pupils benefit from an extensive range of enrichment activities that are both timetabled and extra-curricular. These learning opportunities encourage collaboration, reflection and the development of skills that are aimed at raising aspirations and creating opportunities for pupils to broaden their experiences. A lack of close tracking of this provision limits its impact.
- Leaders have decided that all pupils who start GCSE courses in Year 9 must follow the subjects that lead to the EBacc qualification. While this is aspirational, it provides little opportunity for pupils to follow courses best suited to their needs. This is particularly the case for least-able pupils. The well-planned and delivered REAL curriculum (a combination of humanities and creative subjects) is an example of how the curriculum offers an opportunity for pupils to explore a range of topics through project work. Nevertheless, their opportunities to continue into work-related and computing-based courses are limited. The combination of Year 9 and 10 pupils in some optional subjects this year is causing confusion among some pupils and staff.
- Leaders have clear plans to support disadvantaged pupils in making rapid progress towards aspirational targets. The impact of funding for disadvantaged pupils is demonstrated by the closing of gaps in the progress of this group compared with their peers, both in school and when compared with national averages. However, gaps remain in their performance in some subjects, for example in English and mathematics in Year 10.
- Leaders have high expectations of staff. Teachers' development is supported by observations conducted jointly with colleagues from within the school and outside professionals, which inform individual appraisals for teachers. Pay progression for teachers is clearly linked to the impact of their work and targets which support the school's strategies for development.
- Leaders have ensured that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is effective. Opportunities to listen to outside speakers, trips to local theatres and participation in events such as 'Safer internet day' support pupils' personal development well. Pupils are provided with chances to reflect on issues such as the Holocaust and are able to consider how they might apply their learning to support the local community.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors' understanding of the school's development and their challenge of school leaders is improving. Governors have developed their skills in order to understand the information passed to them. They now work more effectively with leaders to focus on fewer, more precise targets for improvement. However, while governors ensure that school spending is closely monitored and opportunities are created to raise pupils' aspirations, this is not driving rapid progress in the outcomes of all pupils.
 - Governors' aspirations for the school are high and they recognise where weaknesses remain. However, their expectations for the progress and development of all groups of pupils are not resulting in consistently rapid gains. Although reducing, differences in the attendance and exclusion rates between disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities compared with their peers remain too great.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Systems for securing the safety of pupils are supported by detailed policies and procedures that staff use effectively and consistently. Staff have received training on themes such as the 'Prevent' duty, female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation, enhancing their ability to support pupils' well-being. Pupils know whom to go to if they have concerns. They feel well supported by the school's 'red box' and the dedicated email service that enables anonymous concerns to be raised and dealt with. Consequently, the majority of views expressed by parents, pupils and staff confirm that there is an effective culture of safeguarding within the school, reflecting leaders' focused planning on the 'golden thread' for pupils' safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are not securing consistently strong progress across all subjects, particularly in science. Teachers' planning and their expectations of pupils' progress is not consistently high. This is because teachers do not make effective enough use of information about how well pupils are doing. In those subjects where a review of assessment practice is taking place, information about pupils' achievement is not yet secure.
- Half-termly meetings use the latest assessment results to focus teachers' planning on supporting pupils who are underperforming. These interventions are beginning to improve pupils' progress. However, gains are not felt evenly across all groups.
- In subjects where teachers use assessment information effectively, pupils' progress is rapid and well supported. For example, in modern foreign languages and English activities are well matched to pupils' ability. In these subjects, the work of additional adults in the classroom is clearly directed and helps pupils to make good progress, particularly those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school's feedback policy is used effectively by some teachers and pupils respond well to the guidance they receive. Where this is targeted on a pupil's specific development areas, then pupils are able to make adjustments and their learning is improved. This is not happening consistently across all subjects.
- The school's regular cycle of teacher appraisal and development addresses whole-school and individual priorities for improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders review the impact of training closely and respond to shortcomings with rapid training. Where this is effective, the quality of teaching is improved rapidly through peer coaching and time-bound goals. However, staff turnover remains a barrier to establishing consistently secure teaching, learning and assessment across the school.
- The progress of the most able pupils is supported by a whole-school approach to planning. Where this is well applied, the most able are stretched in their learning and make good progress towards their targets. For example, in English, pupils were observed to be exploring complex concepts in literature through skilful questioning by the teacher. However, when the most able are not sufficiently challenged or provided with opportunities to explore concepts further, their progress is more limited.
- Least-able pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, are not consistently supported in improving their literacy skills. Teachers do not use techniques for improving literacy, for example phonics (the sounds that letters make), well enough to support pupils' word formation and self-correction. It is too soon to see the impact of the recently introduced literacy support programme.
- Disadvantaged pupils are supported well across most subjects and make expected progress during key stage 3. However, in several areas teachers do not identify pupils' needs sharply enough. As a result, gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others are not closing quickly.
- Teachers have high expectations for the quality of pupils' work. Few examples were observed where books were untidy and pupils were proud of the work they were doing. Where homework is used to develop pupils' learning, the impact on progress is marked, for example through the REAL learning programme.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Leaders have developed systems that keep pupils safe and establish secure learning environments that encourage learning and promote higher aspirations. However, the high mobility of pupils is an unsettling factor within the school and one which leaders are working to address.

- Leaders have set an expectation that pupils increasingly become more independent in their learning and behaviour. Where this expectation is met, pupils' personal development is strong and their behaviour improves.
- The school engages with external agencies to support the needs of the most vulnerable pupils. The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, indicate that their child is happy and safe at this school.
- Pupils' personal development is supported by an extensive range of enrichment activities. Participation in events such as the recent fair trade summit and opportunities to collaborate in lessons helps pupils develop the skills required for life in modern Britain. The school's healthy minds pilot project and sessions during tutor time add to this aspect of the curriculum.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Overall pupils' attendance has improved this year. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remains too low. There is variation in rates of attendance between year groups which has not improved enough. The persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils is disproportionately high. Leaders recognise this relating to individual cases and take actions that secure improvement. However, the school does not analyse information about groups of pupils rigorously enough.
- Pupils' conduct around the school during social times and in lessons is usually good and reflects leaders' expectations. Pupils take pride in their work and are most often courteous to staff and respectful to one another. Most pupils who spoke to inspectors or responded to Ofsted's survey demonstrate a strong sense of belonging which is reflected in their positive attitudes to one another. Where instances of bullying occur they are dealt with promptly. However, some persistent cases show limited signs of improvement. Where teaching does not meet the needs of individuals, this can lead to off-task behaviour as pupils are bored.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions have reduced but still remain too high, particularly for boys and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Permanent exclusions also remain too high.
- The quality of communal and learning spaces around the school is high. Pupils' work adorns the walls alongside art work and safety information. Inspectors noted that there was no litter seen around the site and pupils were well used to the school's routine at break and lunchtime.
- Leaders' strategy for improving punctuality this year has had a marked and positive effect. Pupils are well aware of expectations for good attendance and understand the consequences of being late to school. As a result, pupils are now rarely late to school and are prompt to lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- The school's assessment system expects pupils to make more progress between Years 7 and 11 than the national average. The progress of Year 10 towards their GCSE outcomes is projected to be good. However, the information provided is based on generous projections toward the end of Year 11 and therefore the likely outcome is unclear.
- The school's new assessment system is becoming increasingly well used. However, leaders' procedures for validating assessment information for all subjects is not yet complete. Consequently, the reliability of assessment information is not secure across all subjects.
- The school's current performance information indicates that outcomes in mathematics have improved. While mathematics continues to underperform when compared with English, gains have been made, particularly in Years 7 and 8. Outcomes in GCSE mathematics are supported by pupils undertaking linked qualifications prior to sitting the examination next summer.
- Evidence of work in pupils' books shows mixed progress over time. The rate of progress varies depending upon the extent to which the learning is targeting pupils' particular needs. Pupils are confident when articulating their current performance, however, during the inspection it was found that too many pupils did not understand their targets and what they were expected to achieve.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in Years 7 to 9 are making progress in line with or better than their peers. However, in Year 10 these pupils' progress is weaker, particularly in English and mathematics. Work in books demonstrates good progress in many cases, for example in Year 7 mathematics and the REAL programme. Pupils' progress is less secure in science.

- In key stage 3, disadvantaged pupils are making good progress when compared with their peers. However, the performance of disadvantaged pupils in Year 10 remains too varied between subjects, particularly in mathematics and for the most able disadvantaged pupils in science.
- All pupils study subjects that lead to the EBacc qualification. However, fewer disadvantaged pupils are currently attaining the EBacc than their peers. This limits their preparation for their subsequent education, training and employment.
- Progress made by the most able pupils varies between year groups and subjects. The most able in Year 10 are entered for triple award science and three quarters are making the level of progress expected by the school. Lower down the school, however, the most able are not making as much progress as their peers overall.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language do not make enough progress in Years 7 and 8. The support provided to this group of pupils on entry to the school is not strong enough to allow for rapid improvements in their English.

School details

Unique reference number	138202
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10011899

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jon Cheyne
Headteacher	Karin Rowsell
Telephone number	0207 193 6337
Website	www.wappinghigh.org
Email address	headteacher@wappinghigh.org
Date of previous inspection	27–28 March 2014

Information about this school

- Wapping High School is a smaller than average school. It was last inspected in March 2014, when it was judged to require improvement.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding given to schools for children looked after and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- An average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is significantly higher than average. The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website about use of the catch-up premium.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 part-lessons in order to gather evidence which contributes to inspectors' evaluation of the school. Some of these observations were conducted jointly and evaluated with a member of the school's extended leadership team. In addition, inspectors observed activities during the enrichment period.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the extended and middle leadership team, members of the governing body including the chair, and by telephone with the school's adviser from the Department for Education. Several meetings were held with pupils in addition to informal discussions during the inspection. A total of 44 pupils expressed their views on Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents including 23 responses to Parent View and inspection survey replies by 14 members of staff. An inspector held telephone conversations with four parents.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including that relating to the leaders' evaluation of the school's performance and development planning; behaviour and attendance; policy and procedures, including the school's single central record of checks made on staff; teachers' performance management; the school's own survey information; external reviews of the school; management of trips and risk; safety and child protection; pupils' achievement; and a wide range of work completed by pupils.

Inspection team

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